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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 000009

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INL/C, INL/AE, AND INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: EFCC DONORS FATIGUED, BUT DONOR  
BENEFICIARIES HOPEFUL

REF: ABUJA 2391

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Lisa Piascik for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: During the week of December 15-19, representatives from the British High Commission as well as the Netherlands and German embassies--all Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) major donors--shared with PolOff their increased skepticism of Nigeria's anti-corruption efforts, with particular attention to EFCC Chair Farida Waziri. Private conversations with the British High Commission specifically revealed that the U.K. is also sharing its skepticism and impatience with other members of the European Commission's (EC) donor group in Nigeria. As the largest contributor and most vocal EC member state and donor in Nigeria, the U.K. is pressing other member states to demand results from Waziri and hinting at "rethinking" its EFCC funding. However, representatives from the EC, as well as its implementing partners United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Bank expressed to PolOff a more hopeful outlook and are encouraging the donors and others in the international community to have the same optimism.

UK's Patience Wearing Thin

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12. (C) The British High Commission's anti-corruption officer (Political Officer) Louise Cox told PolOff on December 15 that the U.K. is "growing tired of EFCC Waziri's inability to secure meaningful convictions since her tenure as Chair of the organization." While no formal change in policy toward the EFCC has occurred, Cox admitted that the British High Commission is "beginning to more vocally convey its dissatisfaction and frustration with the EFCC in its meetings with other European diplomats at the European Commission in Nigeria; hinting that it will rethink additional funding for the EC for EFCC programs." Cox also expressed her government's "disappointment" with Nigeria Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa's obstructionist behavior as it relates specifically to former Delta State Governor James Ibori's corruption case in the U.K. and confirmed that its Home Affairs Ministry would be appealing the decision. With

regard to the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Cox told PolOff that NFIU's new director Norman Wokoma was "shocked and completely surprised by his new appointment." (Note: Wokoma appears to have been equally keen on trying to convince the Brits that his experience, rather than political angling, got him the job, which we doubt, see reftel. End Note.)

#### Nigeria Not Going Dutch as Promised

13. (C) PolOff also met with the Embassy of the Netherlands' Second Secretary Ronald M.J. Sonnemans, who expressed that both "his embassy and those at home are becoming increasingly discouraged with Waziri's leadership and inability to convict corrupt officials." Sonnemans divulged that Netherlands Ambassador to Nigeria Arie van der Wiel is particularly disappointed that "the EFCC has only spent 30% of its budget for its 2007 Dutch and Swiss funded private-public partnership project, which was supposed to increase investigations and prosecutions of corruption in the private sector, but has not gone anywhere since the EFCC lost complete interest in the project."

14. (C) Sonnemans also positively responded to PolOff's overview of the USG's Presidential Proclamation 7750 Initiative (PP7750) which denies or revokes visas for foreign corrupt officials and their dependents. He later called to express the Dutch Ambassador's interest in sharing it with colleagues in the Hague and adopting a similar policy. (Note: If the Dutch were to adopt a similar 7750-type

ABUJA 00000009 002 OF 003

policy, it could be effective as many Nigerians get their connecting flights in Amsterdam.)

#### Germany Unimpressed with Waziri and Impressed with EFCC

15. (C) German Embassy Deputy Head of Mission Matthias Veltin told PolOff on December 18 that his government is "aware of Waziri's ineffectiveness" as the EFCC Chair, but saw this more "the result of the EFCC taking on more work than it has the capacity to handle." He also commented that "the EFCC needs more than one Waziri or one Ribadu" to take on the entire anti-corruption mandate of the country and pick up where Ribadu left off," and suggested that "the EFCC should narrow its focus to "Economic and Financial Crimes." However, Veltin emphasized that Germany has had excellent cooperation on the operational level, specifically between Germany's regional Police Liaison (headquartered in Accra, Ghana) and EFCC investigators when it came to "transborder" issues. (Note: He also said Germany enjoys good cooperation with Nigeria's National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration (NAFDAC), but not with the Nigerian Police, an institution he described as "terrible and completely corrupt." End Note.)

#### EC Hopeful, but Recognizes Downturn in National Psyche

16. (C) Locally employed EC Program Officer for Good Governance Priscilla Ankut suggested to PolOff on December 18 that "the general feeling among EC staff is that Waziri's negative public image is tied to unrealistic expectations that exceeded capacity" and that she "will need time to increase the level of EFCC's effectiveness and acquire public support." Ankut told PolOff that the EFCC has received \$25 million through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for institutional support and is considering additional funding.

UNODC: All We are Asking is "Give Waziri a Chance"

17. (C) UNODC Representative Dagmar Thomas and Senior Project Coordinator Oliver Stolpe defended EFCC Chair Farida Waziri and the EFCC's work when they met with PolOff and Louise Cox

on December 18. (Note: PolOff invited U.K. Political Officer Louise Cox to accompany him to the meeting to convey to the UNODC that the U.S. and U.K. share similar concerns about Nigeria's lack of progress on anti-corruption. End Note.) Thomas and Stolpe blamed Nigeria's weak legal framework and inept judiciary for the lack of solid convictions. While they agreed that the number of reported convictions over the last five years was unimpressive, Thomas and Stolpe professed that "Madame needs more time and is trying; and that next year's annual report on the number of convictions will be the most telling indication of Waziri's efforts." Thomas and Stolpe also concluded that "until Ribadu's press coverage subsides, Waziri deserves to be given a chance to get herself out of Ribadu's shadow and prove her commitment to fighting corruption."

¶8. (C) Like their EC counterparts, Thomas and Stolpe asserted that "former EFCC Chair Nuhu Ribadu took on a much larger and public role in combating corruption than perhaps was originally intended." Stolpe argued that such publicity effectively forced Nigeria's judiciary to expedite corruption cases, lest they also be accused of corruption and as a result, created impossible expectations for Waziri to meet within the first few months of becoming EFCC's new Chair." In a separate conversation about the removal of former NFIU Director A.B. Okauru, Thomas and Stolpe were less forgiving. Both asserted that "Okauru's removal was expected due to weak operational management and unwillingness to cooperate,

ABUJA 00000009 003 OF 003

particularly with the UNODC on its money laundering database project (GOML)."

World Bank: Numbers, not Feelings, Will Determine Success

¶9. (C) World Bank Lead Economist Volker Treichel declared to PolOff on December 19 that he is "agnostic" with regard to the EFCC, and that "we should not use the mood of the country to determine its success or failure, but rather a quantitative analysis of achieving institutional and operational goals." He continued that "likewise, any popular disregard for Waziri should not be factored into the evaluation of actual EFCC progress." To date, claimed Treichel, the EFCC has made a positive impression in Bayelsa State with its World Bank funded Civil Service Reform project, particularly in the area of participatory budget processes. He also suggested that the EFCC has been inadequate in publicizing such efforts. Treichel admitted, however, that "the EFCC's corruption cases are nothing compared to administering the \$800 billion petroleum subsidy, which completely lacks any kind of transparency."

¶10. (C) COMMENT: The international donor community almost unanimously agreed that the negative publicity surrounding the actions of EFCC and its leadership within the last three months has negatively affected public opinion and in significant measure also contributed to donor fatigue. The U.K. and Netherlands are clearly the most pessimistic, while the Germans have a mixed impression, separating Waziri's poor leadership from those on the operational level with whom they have a good working relationship. While the UNODC, EC, and to some extent the World Bank, are clearly hopeful that within a year Waziri and the EFCC will make marked progress, it is more likely that such optimism may instead reflect these international organizations' need to defend the success of their projects rather than their actual faith in the EFCC. Ultimately, the EFCC will be judged on its ability to secure meaningful convictions and create strong deterrents to corruption. To date, the numbers do not indicate any success story. End Comment.

¶11. (U) This cable was coordinated with U.S. Consulate Lagos. Piascik